

American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Grades America's infrastructure "D+"

The condition of America's infrastructure is poor and getting poorer, according to a "Report Card" issued by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) on Sept. 4, 2003, which says it will take \$1.6 trillion in investment to put it right.

ASCE's 2003 Progress Report on its Infrastructure Report Card is available online at <http://www.asce.org/reportcard/>. The condition of the nation's navigable waterways, dams, roads, bridges, schools, aviation, public transit, drinking water, waste water, solid and hazardous waste disposal and energy systems have shown little improvement since they were graded an overall "D+" in 2001, with some areas sliding toward failing grades. ASCE's 2003 Progress Report for America's Infrastructure examines the trends affecting the 12 categories evaluated in their 2001 Report Card for America's Infrastructure - and the findings are not encouraging. None of the systems rated higher than "C+," and nine were rated "D+," "D" or "D-." ASCE rated the condition of six categories as holding steady, while the other six reflected a downward trend. None showed improvement.

Of particular concern to the Army Corps of Engineers, ASCE assigned a grade of "D+" for Navigable Waterways, and the 2003 Progress Report indicates a downward trend - largely reflecting aging capital facilities. Almost 50% of the inland waterway locks and dams are now exceeding their original design lives. The report also cites an increase in both planned and unplanned outages at key locks; and serious investment gaps in both capital and maintenance spending.

The Progress Report notes that a bi-annual water resources authorization act was not enacted in 2002, postponing needed improvements for waterway programs. ASCE calls on Congress and Administration to pass the pending Water Resources Development Act (H.R. 2557) in 2003 to address these future needs. In addition, ASCE calls for the investment gap to be addressed through aggressive modernization and maintenance programs, including spending down the Inland Waterways and Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund balances.

A webcast of ASCE's Sept. 4, 2003 press conference at the Rayburn Building can be accessed at <http://www.house.gov/transportation/>